

14 FAH-4 H-330 PROCESSING INCOMING ITEMS

(CT:DPM-2; 05-06-2009)
(Office of Origin: A/LM)

14 FAH-4 H-331 SCREENING OF INCOMING ITEMS

(CT:DPM-2; 05-06-2009)

USPS guidelines on mail security are found in USPS Publication 166, Mail Center Security Guide, dated March 2008. The three chapters address biological agents (including anthrax), mail bombs and bomb threats, and mail center theft.

14 FAH-4 H-331.1 Domestic Screening of Incoming Items

(CT:DPM-2; 05-06-2009)

- a. Screening by USPS: All first-class letters up to one-half inch in thickness are screened by USPS for anthrax. All machinable letter mail addressed to Washington DC ZIP codes 202xx-205xx is irradiated by USPS.
- b. For items arriving at DPM/U from USPS, commercial transportation companies, or other government agencies: At SA-32, all envelopes and packages are visually inspected, screened to detect radiological and biological contaminants, and x-rayed for prohibited items and hazardous materials prior to shipment to post or delivery to HST and Washington area annexes.
- c. For items arriving at domestic offices: The owning bureau or office determines local screening measures, in consultation with A/OPR/FMS/DESD and DS. Guidance for visually identifying suspicious mail is presented in 14 FAH-4 Exhibit H-331. Items deemed to be suspicious should be handled in accordance with the mail room's established procedures which may include opening and inspecting the mail in a biological safety cabinet or other controlled manner. It should be noted that personal mail cannot be opened without the consent of the recipient.

14 FAH-4 H-331.2 Screening of Incoming Items at Posts Abroad

(CT:DPM-2; 05-06-2009)

- a. Mail screening is a separate and distinct task from mail sorting. Mail screening must be performed in a facility outside the main building, in a removable modular facility (see 14 FAH-4 H-121.1 for physical requirements of a mail screening facility).
- b. Categories of items to be screened:
 - (1) Items arriving by classified diplomatic pouch do not need to be screened prior to entry into a mission building. Classified pouch shipments are deemed as being from a trusted source and transported by a trusted shipper, delivered on safeguarded transit;
 - (2) Items arriving by unclassified pouch are deemed as being from a trusted source but not transported by a trusted shipper. Therefore, they must be screened at the mail screening facility prior to entry into a mission building if there is evidence of tampering of the seal or damage to the bag. In addition, posts may, on a random basis, screen a sample number of items from unclassified pouch contents;
 - (3) Mail arriving via military postal service (MPS) or diplomatic post office (DPO) has not been screened by DOD or the Department and must be screened at post in a mail screening facility prior to entry into a mission building. Any mail opened must be done under the provisions established in the DOD Postal Manual (DOD 4525.6-M);
 - (4) All commercial transportation company deliveries, local deliveries, and local mail must be screened in a mail screening facility prior to entry into a mission building.
- c. Mail screening procedures at posts abroad:
 - (1) Visually inspect all envelopes and packages using the guidelines in 14 FAH-4 Exhibit H-331. If post has screening equipment such as an x-ray machine, magnetometer or itemizer, post should also use this equipment to ensure the envelope/package has no suspicious materials;
 - (2) If suspicious items are found during the mail screening process and post has a Class I biological safety cabinet, the items must be inspected and opened in the cabinet by personnel wearing disposable gloves. Personal mail arriving in a diplomatic pouch can be opened without the consent of the recipient; personal mail arriving via USPS, MPS, DPO, or international mail cannot be opened without the consent of the recipient;

- (3) If suspicious items are found during the mail screening process and post does not have a Class I biological safety cabinet, the suspicious items should not be disturbed any further and be immediately placed in a nearby secure location. Unless an immediate threat to life is identified, personnel present must remain in the immediate area, and only authorized response personnel may enter so that potential contamination that may be present is not spread. The mail control officer/postal officer and regional security officer must be contacted to make a decision as to whether the item can be opened at post under controlled conditions (e.g., using personal protection equipment) or if the local hazmat unit should be called to respond. Response personnel will make a determination as to whether or not personnel must continue to remain in the area;
- (4) After being opened in the biological safety cabinet or under controlled conditions in the mail screening facility, if the item is deemed safe, it may be re-entered into the mail processing stream;
- (5) After being opened in the biological safety cabinet or under controlled conditions in the mail screening facility, if the item is deemed contaminated, it must be left in the biological safety cabinet, with the biological safety cabinet remaining on. The mail control officer/postal officer and regional security officer must be contacted immediately to institute procedures for dealing with hazardous materials. No personnel may leave the mail screening facility until after decontamination procedures have been completed. See 12 FAH-1 Annex F Addendum 8 for procedures for handling suspicious powder in threat letters or containers received at post.

14 FAH-4 H-332 PICK-UP OF INCOMING ITEMS

(CT:DPM-2; 05-06-2009)

- a. A/LM/PMP/DPM acts as the agent for the Department when registered, certified, and other special category mail is delivered by the United States Postal Service (USPS). If official registered and certified letters and other controlled mail addressed to offices and employees arrive at HST and annexes, it is signed for by cleared IMMS staff. Addressees or their designated mail staff then sign for the mail items at pick-up:
 - (1) If USPS Form PS-3811, Return Receipt Requested card is used, cleared IMMS staff members must accept it and complete it and return it to the sender via USPS;

- (2) Department offices should establish procedures to ensure that a record of receipt is kept on file that identifies the customer accepting delivery.
- b. For accountable mail (i.e., USPS Certified Mail and USPS Registered Mail), the mail clerk must receive positive identification.

14 FAH-4 H-333 THROUGH H-339 UNASSIGNED

14 FAH-4 EXHIBIT H-331

GUIDANCE FOR IDENTIFYING SUSPICIOUS ENVELOPES/PARCELS

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Items with any of the following characteristics may indicate that the item is suspicious and should be segregated for inspection by the mail control officer/postal officer or regional security officer:

Inappropriate or unusual labeling:

- excessive postage
- handwritten or poorly typed addresses
- misspellings of common words
- strange return address or no return address
- incorrect title or name, or title without a name
- not addressed to a specific person
- missing barcodes on USPS mail
- marked with restrictions, such as "Personal," "Confidential," or "Do Not X-Ray"
- marked with any threatening language
- postmarked from a city or state that does not match the return address
- mailed from an unknown foreign address

Appearance:

- powdery substance felt through or appearing on the package or envelope
- oily stains, discoloration, or odor
- use of waterproof wrapping paper
- rigid, lopsided or uneven envelope
- excessive packaging materials such as masking tape, string, etc.

Other suspicious signs:

- excessive weight
- unusual sounds from the package, such as ticking
- protruding wires or aluminum foil
- delivery of mail by unexplained means or in an unusual place